

The Leader's remarks in meeting with a group of poets - 2 /Jul/ 2015

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The birth of the Imam Mojtaba, Imam Hassan (PBUH); the embodiment of good in the words of the Last Prophet (PBUH), who chose this name [Hassan] for this newborn – and this is very great, [and] very important that the Prophet (PBUH) would name this reverend, [and] this auspicious child “Hassan” – would be, God willing, blessed for all of you.

I remind the blessings of the month of Ramadan for your sensitive hearts, your ethereal souls, [and] your fluid feelings; actually, if anybody is supposed to take advantage of this big heap of blessings, among those who must make the most and do it, are those who have [a special] flair, have [an ethereal] soul, have [a sensitive] heart, have [fair] feelings; that is, you [the poets]. Who would be better than you for taking advantage of the minutes and moments and hours and days and nights of this month – which is a month for getting close to God, a month for ethereality of heart, a month for affinity with the Almighty God, a month for the mention [of God], [and] a month for humbleness – and who more suitable than people with such pure and ethereal hearts and delicate feelings [to avail themselves of this month].

To enter the paradise of [constant] mention [of God] and affinity [with God] and enthusiasm [for getting close to God], the best means are prayers that have been specified for this month; both those prayers that are special to this month, and those prayers that can be read at all crucial times, like the prayers of Sha'baniyah, like prayers [that have been given] in [the book of prayers,] Sahifa Sajjadiya; taking advantage of these [prayers] is very valuable. “And hear my prayer, when I pray to you, and hear my call when I call on you, and pay attention to me when I pray to you;” these [concepts] can be expressed by your delicate hearts with more attention [and] with more focus. “Verily, I have fled toward you and have stood in front of you;” these are interpretations [and] words that have come forth from the most delicate of hearts and the most eloquent of tongues. Who must pay attention to them, understand them, [and] take advantage of them better than you, better than these pure and delicate hearts? Do not neglect praying in this month. In Sha'baniyah prayer [you say]: “O God! Bestow upon me a heart that would get close to you through its enthusiasm, and [give me] a tongue, whose honesty would elevate it toward you, and [give me] a [kind of] look who would get close to you due to its righteousness;” such a heart whose enthusiasm [for getting close to God], will uplift it, [and help it to] ascend [and] get close to the Divine Being, this [is what] a human being asks God. Well, what heart is more ready than that sensitive and delicate heart? Which, thank God, this exists in you.

In the prayer [called] Abi Hamza Thomali, [you say]: “[O God! I came to know you through yourself and it was you who guided me onto you and called me toward you and if it were not for you, I would not know what are you;” this delicate spiritual contact with God, with the origin of compassion and dignity; these are very valuable, these are very important; [such a contact with God will] give warmth to these hearts that are sensitive, maintains them, inspires them with hope, and becomes a refuge and [point of] reliance for them. I don't care for whom and for what purpose the late [Iranian poet] Akhavan has written this poem; I read this poem addressed to the [book of prayer,] Sahifa Sajjadiya; I read this poem addressed to the Abi Hamza Thomali prayer: “O pivot and haven of the most beautiful of chaste and glorious moments of my loneliness and recluse, O [you] my sweet and dignified river.” This is prayer. Don't give this up, do not turn your back on prayer; prayer is very valuable. Prayer is the same elixir which can change those hearts that have been contaminated with despair, are plagued with suspicion, or are polluted with wrong feelings, [and] guide them toward the right path; prayer is such a thing. Of course, simple reading of the words of prayer is a lower stage of praying – which these words can be read by a human who does not know their

meaning, or just know their apparent meaning – but getting entangled in prayer, [and] getting entangled in its themes and becoming immersed in them is very valuable.

Well, poem is an effective element, [and] its effect within the set of verbal factors, is an intensified effect; that is, no word, [regardless of] how eloquent, how beautiful, [and] how meaningful [it is], if [it were] not in verse, it won't have this effect; poem is such a system, [and] is such an element. Poem plays an inciting role, in a place which is a place for incitement; it [also] plays a guiding role, plays the role of setting the direction and plays an orientating role for the listener and for the person who reads the poem for himself; well, this is a cause for responsibility. When you have a wealth, [and] an ability, which can be used to do great things, if you don't use it, you would be acting against your responsibility, [and] against your obligation. This is [a] cause of responsibility. Now, the Almighty God has bestowed this bounty on you, but like all bounties, it would be asked about, question will be asked about [what you have done with] the divine bounty. You will be asked about what you have done with this bounty.

By taking advantage of poetry as a tool, the audience can be guided toward the right path and the direct path; they [the audience] can be also made go astray, [and] make them fail. Poem can take humans to be abyss; we have this sort of poems. Especially today that, unfortunately, a runaway culture, which has nothing to do with the moral and human norms, is being widely propagated through these new tools – new media tools -; sometimes poems become a tool for making mistakes, taking a tumble, and going astray; this is the other side of this issue. Therefore, a poet can do both things. Through his delicate feelings, a poet both understands, and becomes ecstatic, and becomes nostalgic and [starts to] write a poem; this [kind of] writing by poet is the result of enthusiasm, result of nostalgia, result of feeling, and understanding and observing a thing that others cannot observe. Well, this issue has two sides: it can both direct [people] toward good, [and] can do the opposite [of that]. If poem comes excessively under the influence of the sexual instinct – which unfortunately today some hands in our country are dragging [poem] in this direction, [are] taking it forcefully [in this direction], after our youths have moved in sincere and delicate and very beautiful spiritual and epic and revolutionary conditions, now certain hands have started in various places, most of all in virtual spaces; now, other means also exist, [but] they [also] want to drag and take [our youths] toward excessive sexual instinct through poem – this would be very bad, [and] this is an alarm ring. Sometimes it is this [problem that plagues poem, [and] sometimes pursuit of personal profit and sometimes eulogy of oppression, which unfortunately, this [latter] concept has a long record in our history; to eulogize oppression and oppressor.

Today, we have the opposite point in front of us [as well]; thank God, I have fortunately seen that a few of our dear young poets have stood against [it]; I have already heard [and] read poems about Yemen – [including] the poem [written by] Mr. Sayyar – and other poems, which is very good; these [poems] that you have written, these [poems] that [our] friends read tonight; these are correct, this is correct, this is that correct job [which must be done], this is that obligation of which the Almighty God will ask [questions]. One of the paragraphs in Makarem-ol-Akhlaq prayer is this: “and assign me to what you will ask me about tomorrow;” this must be thought of; tomorrow, they will ask us about certain things; [the person who prays] says: “O Almighty! That thing about which you are going to question me, today provide me with a means of attending to it and acting according to it. Well, now you have the means; there may be people whose hearts are filled [with complaints] but cannot give voice to them; you, thank God, can say them; [so,] say them, [and] it will be effective. This poem that you write for Bahrain, or write for Yemen, or write for Lebanon, or write for Gaza, [or] write for Palestine, [or] write for Syria; every poem that you write about the goals of the Muslim Ummah, such a poem can be used at any point and can be taken advantage of. If this poem moves in these directions, then [the saying] “certainly some poems are knowledge,” would apply to your poem, which certainly [such a] poem is knowledge.

I want to say – of course, I have said this in this meeting and in many other meetings – that impartiality in the confrontation between the right and wrong has no meaning. Sometimes a confrontation is ambiguous, [well,] that is a different story; when there is the right and the wrong, here, impartiality is meaningless; one must take sides with [what is] the right, [and] stand against [what is] the wrong; now, one can stand [against the wrong] in its military form, [and another] one can stand [against it] in a political form; they can stand [against the wrong] in various forms;

one can stand [against it] with language, with expression, [and] with thinking; [at any rate we] must stand [against it]. A poet cannot remain impartial in the confrontation between the right and the wrong.

If a poet, [and an] artist remained impartial, they would waste the bounty of God; if, God forbid, they took sides with the wrong, then they would have betrayed [their cause and] would have committed a crime; [in this situation] the problem is not about oversight, it is about [committing a] crime. Well, your nation has suffered a lot during these long years; these oppression should be retold, this should be reflected to the world.

[They] bombarded [the city of] Sardasht in [the Iranian year, 13]66 (1987) – [its anniversary] belongs to these days - is this a joke? [That they would] chemically bombard a city, annihilate thousands of people in a city – child, adult, elderly, youth, woman, [and] man – and the world remain silent! A world where sometimes the fall of a cat in a well becomes a major issue [and is] reflected by news agencies and in newspapers and in televisions that yes a cat or, for example, a fox had fallen into a well, [and] that organ, [and] that organ, [and] that organ came together to take it out alive, or a marine animal has fallen on the beach and is dying, [and they try] to somehow return it to sea. For these things, the world stokes a lot of ballyhoo, then it remains silent on the chemical massacre of a city! By saying the world, I don't mean nations, nations have no means, have no tool; I mean the powers that dominate the propaganda machines of the world; its Persian translation is America, England, dominant Western forces, [and] the Zionist force. These are [the powers] that dominate the world's propaganda sphere [and] don't allow anybody to be informed [of anything]. Now, they are pounding Yemen in that way – day and night – [and] no voice [of opposition] is heard; they were pounding Gaza yesterday, [and] before that they were pounding Lebanon, [and] no voice is heard coming out of anybody; now assume that two smugglers are tried in some place, [and] are executed, [in that case] a propaganda outcry is launched; well, this is the world; what should be done in the face of this world? What an honorable person does in the face of such partiality, in the face of such an outrage, [and] in the face of such evilness? Regardless of the religious motivation and faith-based obligation; what judgment does human honor, human conscience, [and] humanity of humans pass? These are all burdens on [our] shoulders.

I, of course, am very satisfied with the progress of poetry in the country during post-revolution era and [the situation] has really greatly improved. These young people who read poems today, have clear and evident differences with the young people who, say, read poems ten years ago; I mean real progress has been made; poem is very good, however, the capacity of poem in our country is much more than this; is much more than this. You look now [and] see this young girl is a student – I have heard that the Shahrestan-e Adab [cultural and arts institute] has started student activities, [and] brings people together – our students, our youths, our adolescents, our girl, our boy, are writing poems and do it this good, with these good themes, [and] with this powerful imagination; this is very good; of course, I [must] say that the general level of today's poem has not yet reached the general level of poem [that would be] suitable for Iran; I mean, we have had periods [of time] – which are not very far from us – when the general level of poem, that is, in view of those climaxes that had existed, has been higher than our current level. Well, we have had prominent [figures], [we have had] poets, both in ode and in ghazel, in different styles; [we] must have them so as to uplift this level; this needs work [to be done] [and] this needs effort.

In terms of the expanse [of poem] we have a large expanse; we must try to go ahead with this broad expanse and this needs work [to be done]. Of course, the Arts Department [of the Islamic Development Organization] is responsible, [and] other organs are also responsible, state-run organs and organs related to [the Islamic Republic] Establishment and the likes of them – [including] the IRIB and others – have duties [to fulfill]. Poem should be valued, poem is a very big phenomenon; [and] is an important phenomenon. I see that in our system, in our country, those who must understand this fact, as if some of them – now I don't mean all [of them] – has not correctly found out about the depth of the importance of poem; [they] have not valued poem at all; “they did not value poem as it deserves;” did not correctly understand the real value of poem. Poem has a strange effect; sometimes a single line of poem or, now, a ghazel or a piece of poem, is more effective than a one-hour [or] two-hour long speech by an expert, [and] informed person. Well, this is a very important issue; I mean, this is, as saying goes, a valuable gem; enjoys such importance; they must be able [to value this].

By the way, one of the works that is very good in our country, which thank God, its effects were seen in this meeting and had been seen before and I am very content with that, is the rapid reaction that our young poets show to incidents; this is very valuable; this is very good. Nobody should imagine that this is a negative thing; no, this is very positive. Throughout history and in contemporary time close to us, we have had cases in which these very rapid reactions have created the best effects. When that Israeli airplane was hijacked by that girl, the late Amiri Firouzkouhi [wrote an ode]; now Amiri Firouzkouhi, [our] friends who know him [are aware] that well, he was not young and revolutionary and things like that, but on the basis of the feeling that he found, [he] wrote a beautiful and excellent ode at the same time – [in the Iranian year] '40-odd (circa 1960s) – suitable for that period, suitable for that time; [his poem started with] “there a gazelle...” now I don't remember many of its lines, at that time, I knew many of its lines [by heart]; I had heard [the poem] from the poet himself. Anyway, this is very good that rapid reaction is shown to incidents and [those incidents] are explained; this is very good.

And I hope that, God willing, the poem of the revolution would rise in rank and level day by day. Of course, my purpose of the poem of the revolution is not that poem that was written during the period of the [Islamic] revolution even though it was against the revolution; this is not [my] purpose of revolutionary poem. Some people think that the war poem is the poem that is written about war, even if [it is] against war! This is not war poem, this is anti-war poem. The poem of the revolution means that poem which serves the goals of the revolution; this is the poem of the revolution, not the poem [that has been written] during revolution period; this is not what I mean. What I mean by the poem of the revolution is the poem that serves the goals of the revolution. [I mean the poem] that serves justice, serves humanity, serves religion, serves unity, serves national upliftment, serves all-out progress of the country, serves [the purpose of] making human beings in true sense of the world in the country; this can be called the poem of the revolution, which is in line with the goals of the revolution.

I hope, God willing, God will make all of you successful, give you long life, and [that] your youths will, God willing, tread this direct path for many years and, God willing, give benefit to the country and the future and the [future] generations.

Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings.